

Tuesday, May 8, 12

C-II\Research questions

1. Any mention of PSALM in Cuban transcripts.
Or other accounts.
2. What happened to invasion planning in 1963? Covert actions?
Assassination?
3. References from my Politics and the Cuban Missile Crisis Paper, 1990
4. Chronology of disclosures since 1962.
5. What did Khrushchev intend for Berlin, after revelation of missiles in
November?
- 6.

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Topics for a C-II historians thread:

1. The accident with the cruise missile, Friday night. What NSA and I thought. Actual implications. (But inference: K was not in control of SAMs, perhaps missiles).
2. Did K hope that JFK would conceal intelligence prior to election? Did that affect timing of move? Why did it have to be finished by early November, if not related to election? (Was it just worry that invasion might take place sooner?)
3. Was there a real possibility that JFK would feel it "necessary" to invade before the election? (See Mongoose planning. McN directive of Oct. 2. Exercises.)
4. Thus, did K really avert a US invasion? (He provoked real JCS' expectations of invasion, excuse for it; but blocked this in the mind of JFK and McN.)
5. What earlier participants and scholars didn't know, and how it affected their interpretations.
6. Might JFK really have concealed intelligence prior to election? Preparation for this? PSALM, and prior restraints. ('muzzling the press") (See Nixon in 1970, Cienfuegos; LBJ on Aug. 2, 1964)
7. Did K plan to press on Berlin? Or were his hints of that simply distraction? Would he have done so, if he had succeeded? (as came close: **NOTE: A Soviet win was almost as close as a nuclear war!)**

5-2-12

QUESTIONS, on C-II

What "was" "the probability" (a reasonable range of probabilities) of nuclear war in the crisis?

How "close" did the world come?

Or, any war?

Nuclear war could have come about from the following events, or sequence of events:

Why did some (including me, and hsr!) think the probability of nuclear war was low, at the time?

Why did some think it was high?

How did these assessments change by 1987?

By 1992?

Now?

Why did K do what he did? (What is the evidence for this, and when did it become available?)

What were his expectations, and what reason did he have for believing them?
How realistic or unrealistic were they?

E.g., that a US invasion was imminent

That JFK would accept, reluctantly, the deployment, once it was operational

-That an open transport would risk blockade, or JFK threat-commitment

What were his various motives, and his priorities?

How well were they understood by CIA analysts? By members of ExComm? By JFK? [Note: JFK was wrong to think "the chance was between 1/3 and 1/2 that K would go all the way to nuclear war: K had no such readiness) (Note: thus, **no one** expected that the crisis would end as it did, **when it did**, with no greater concession by JFK and without an air attack: though some (even I!)—not JFK or RFK or Rusk or McNamara or Bundy-- did expect a back-down eventually (perhaps soon, in a day: especially after I heard of RFK's deadline). By others? (including scholars, RAND, press...)]

Was K "crazy" to believe he could get away with it? If not, why not? (The latter would bear on a failure of imagination and analysis—and probably, information-- by CIA analysts, other than McCone himself).

Why did JFK do what he did?

What were his expectations, and what reason did he have for believing them? How realistic or unrealistic were they?

What was the role and importance of emotion, for JFK? Domestic politics?

How justified were the risks JFK saw himself as taking (and what were they)? How justified in terms of the "real" risks (with full knowledge, and hindsight)?

What would have happened if other courses had been followed?

- Immediate air attack

- Followed by invasion

- "eating it"; perhaps, Stevenson proposal at outset (Nitze! Rusk! Ball? McNamara? (or, after blockade)

- News had leaked out (despite, or instead of, PSALM) before Oct. 14 (well, it did, but what if widely believed?)

- JFK had told Gromyko, pursued quiet diplomacy, including threats

- JFK had announced news on Oct. 16 (no planning on how to frame it, what response to forecast, how to respond to public/Congressional reaction, how to respond to SU...

- K: Open deployment: "Cuba part of Warsaw Pact"

- announced in the spring

--announced while going on, in late summer

--announced while missiles were being installed, in the fall (before September 4)

K: SAM shoots down U-2 on October 14 (SAM operational?) (or, earlier announces that it will defend Cuban airspace)

K: delays MRBM installation until SAMs operational (in area of deployment) (McCone's expectation)

K: **announces** tac nucs deployed, with warheads, and 40,000 SU troops, either with delegation or with use "on the table" for K in case of invasion (NATO strategy)

Biggest question: **Why didn't he?** (Instead: the Strangelove Perplex!)

[NOTE: in reality, US had strong reason to fear immediate consequences of invasion in the Caribbean: tac nucs; Soviet troops! And guerrilla war!—not just, or even mainly, "horizontal escalation" to Berlin or Turkey. K had prepared a strong defense, like NATO's, in Cuba itself! **NO ONE in ExComm considered this as a possibility, let alone, a certainty!**

And K failed to make the US aware of these realities, at any point! (or ever: no "leak" from Cuba or the Soviet Union, even 25 years later in 1987; not until 1992 (or 1990?) in Moscow! (Without McNamara-Blight conferences, and end of CW, we wouldn't know still! "Lessons" of crisis would be all wrong and dangerously misleading!

As it is, hawks in 1962 were wildly, catastrophically wrong: about consequences of attacking! (Not in Berlin or Turkey, but in Cuba!) **To repeat: as in the case of the missile gap (in the other direction) they didn't allow for the actual reality (tac nucs, large Soviet force: prolonged guerrilla war) as a possibility, in their range of possibilities; and the action they proposed would have been catastrophic.**

(Catastrophic for the world: Cuba, SU, Europe: nuclear winter (including US). K was doubly reckless or irresponsible, in putting the tac nucs and warheads and troops there (aside from the MRBMs), concealing the deployment "all too well," and not ever announcing them! If Castro had shot down more planes on Saturday...

Note the terrific **intelligence failure** of US in not getting a hint of any of these realities, ever (ever when Soviet troops were removed!)—or for 30 years, when Soviets revealed them after CW. This has never been commented on, or

investigated by CIA (which recognized other failures!) (From SI or overhead recon or Soviet or Cuban leaks or informants!)

(Were EXCOMM members culpable in not imagining these possibilities? After all, we knew the FROGS were there, and Il-28s (cruise missiles?): and at least 14,000 troops.

--If JFK didn't want a sub stopped at the blockade line on Wednesday, Oct. 24—"anything but that"—did he know what the Navy was doing on subsequent days? Did he approve? Why would he? (It **was** even more dangerous than he feared!)

--Why try to produce a *fait accompli* to one's own public? (Oct. 15-22) A reason: the course you want to follow will be very controversial: some will favor alternatives, some will say it's too risky or that it can't work, or not strong enough..

(you don't think so, and you prefer to present it in the context of success; or at least, commitment, too late to change) or that it's illegal (likewise: success will trump that concern; see Ike to Dulles on use of nuclear weapons)

--Did anyone press invasion rather than air strike, before Oct. 22? That wouldn't put MRBMs/Sovs under direct attack... Well, too risky: JCS would want to try to destroy them at outset. (The former would mean: the missiles must go, but not by direct attack; regime that invited them must go, by invasion—as already threatened and prepared. The JFK threat on Oct. 22 should have sufficed, against “rational” opponent: One missile from Cuba will lead to full retaliation against SU. Still, danger of UA, even if not under direct attack (see SAM).

Saturday, May 5, 12

(on F&N):

Did K clearly wish and intend to deceive JFK?

219: Bolshakov always bitter about having been used to deceive RFK: "only weapons of a defensive character." Oct. 4. (Well, "defensive purpose"!

Did K clearly wish and intend that JFK would be deceived, would not see the missiles before the election? Why reassure him, if he wouldn't see them anyway? Was this a "helpful lie," so that JFK could say that he had been deceived, which is why he hadn't denounced the missiles (or "seen them") before the election and taken action? But wasn't his intelligence service likely to see the missiles anyway? What role would deceiving JFK about his intentions play—unless it discouraged JFK from sending planes over the SA-2 missiles? (Which it did, up until...

See K to Udall on Sept. 6: SU would not press on Berlin until after election. "Out of respect for your president, we won't do anything until November." (Meaning, really, won't announce arrival of missiles: like Israel, "we won't introduce nuclear weapons..."; was it meant to suggest, "we won't put missiles in Cuba before November"? He did mention Cuba, and allegation (!) that US was putting nuclear weapons in Japan. (WAS IT?) (See Iwakuni, 1961! "Just recently I was reading that you have placed atomic weapons on Japanese territory, and surely this is not something the Japanese need." 209

(Where did he read that? Speaking of Okinawa?)

F&N:

230. In recommending full invasion at 11 on Oct. 18 Thursday, **what was JCS assuming** about presence of nuclear warheads? Possibility of firing under attack, whether air attack or invasion? Possibility of tac nucs against invasion?

225: on first meeting of XCom on Oct. 16, McN assumes that nuclear warheads might already be present (as they were) and thus that an air attack would be folly! (Yes: does he change either of those assumptions?)

On 18th, JFK "overruled concerns—especially those expressed by McNamara—that any use of force implied taking the risk of an inadvertent nuclear war. Kennedy doubted that the Soviets would react to a US military strike by launching their Cuba missiles" unless they're going to be using them from every place." He assumed that Moscow controlled the missiles and that the danger of a nuclear accident was low. In Kennedy's mind Berlin was his only Achilles' heel in this crisis. He assumed that the Soviets' proportional response would be a similar action against West Berlin. Then what would he do? What could he do?"

[McN was right, JFK wrong. JCS? Taylor? Others? JFK was wrong about Moscow control of any of the missiles; and didn't even know about the FROGS. [Hyp: Castro was especially furious at the removal of the FROGS.] He was wrong that Berlin was the only problem; or that there was a low chance of unauthorized action or

inadvertent war (from point of view of Moscow—or US) CHECK EXCOMM
TRANSCRIPTS]

5/8/12

The blockade did panic the whole world. It did seem to be highly dangerous; it was hard to imagine Khrushchev backing down from his initial explicit commitment to challenge it (which Dobrynin presumed would be carried out).

(What did the JCS really expect? Were they "sure" Khrushchev would turn back? Did they want that, or hope for a clash? (With the SU, not just Cuba!) (Fulbright thought it more dangerous than attacking the missiles in Cuba: wrong, although the Soviet troops there were not yet acknowledged). Even the JCS may have thought it more likely to escalate than an attack; did any want that, other than LeMay? Did Shoup?!

I wonder if the JCS, knowing of Mongoose and Northwoods (!) didn't assume the presence of missiles from almost the beginning, like McCone. Did they agree with the SNIE in September? What were the JCS saying earlier?

Thursday, November 10, 2011

c-II\QUESTIONS

1. Why didn't K reveal to US, no later than when missiles were discovered (October 14, local commanders believed; or Oct. 22):

missiles

Sov troops

Tac missiles: cruise and FKR's

And no later than warheads arrival (Oct. 23): presence of warheads?

No: first arrival of (tac) warheads: oct. 1? (need chronology)

And Cuban-Sov security treaty?

And at the latest, by Saturday, Oct. 27?

2. Couldn't SU have established a basis of both rights—for SU and Cuba—to form treaty, (repudiating Monroe Doctrine?), and/or to transfer arms and troops for defense; and necessity for doing this (US invasion threats, assassination attempts (! Why keep these secret?), and Mongoose, after C-I); and parallel both to Turkey and to NATO? How could US have really claimed to forbid this? Blockade? How could they have gotten OAS to approve blockade or attack, then?ⁱ

END NOTES

ⁱ The secrecy and surprise were essential (!) to making this move look illegitimate and ominous; likewise, the collaboration of both US and SU in keeping secret Mongoose and preparations (exercises) for invasion, which led to misleading both US public and intelligence analysts as to the likelihood and motives for Soviet measures to defend Cuba.

(There was remarkably little, if any attention, by CIA or other analysts to how an overthrow of the Cuban regime—whether by Mongoose! Or by invasion—would be seen by the Soviets/K as affecting their interests! (As if SU was oblivious to the implications for US leaders of “losing SVN”).

By the same token, there was almost no discussion (?) or understanding in the ExComm as to the potential promise of an offer not to invade Cuba (was that seen as irrelevant or as “goes without saying”? Result of compartmentation of invasion/Mongoose plans!).

Why was there so much expectation that Turkey would be the important trade to the Soviets? Granted, it removed a close-in threat: so what? (Except for decapitation). (McNamara totally discounted this, for Cuba). Interesting to analyze: why **was** this such an irritant, for both sides? (Turkey, unlike “Finland”, was not in the SU sphere of influence; as we thought Cuba was, ours. But then, SU was proposing to regard it as in their sphere; totally challenging the Monroe Doctrine; though JFK said, “What’s that?! Still, there were no other foreign bases in the Western Hemisphere: or were there? British? French?)

Removal of Turkish missiles didn’t affect our overall threat to SU at all (except, again, for quick decap!) But removal of Cuban missiles actually affected SU FS capability very significantly! (From practically nothing to something).

DeTherem

✓ China in FA late '89

✓ R on Politics

Bentley-Alsop

✓ JFK in Sat Eve Post

✓ McKee - Dip. Hist. (Hewley)

Chronology of disclosures

Did R realize he was going to miss JFK?

(was he surprised?)

27 May

Research

W/ did notes that K did not order S40 shooting
first emerge?

1964/Me

(1987#
Cine; Harsh;

Seyrick

clim 3

- Castro/UN Ridge

- Cuba rumor

- K behind Castro

(McG: K behind we have areas in paper" frustrated!
Adone??

(continuous compare to 1964! (if not to C-II

REF; Oxford; Morgane

meetings with
REF

still unsettled:

REF/NER relation to approx. plans, Castro

\ Guinean private Exam

(PK - mini Adone!

(Talk to Adone on Oct 27!

Harsh

(WHO was VFR with on Oct 15 night??

(Who else was pushed out of WH?

Stu WH

DC:

Nash

Blair

Scanning? → Blanton / Blum / Kornbluh

Daly?

Maldonado

MHH (where was he
in Oct '62?)

Bernstein

Kristen

(TCS) -

Harshbarger

(Blum?)

PK

Pietrovan ...

Kuiniak

Mr. - Arabian Eagle

✓ Chris FA

✓ Faye - Hampton (?)

Oliver - Bartlett

✓ Oliver - JFR

(McN? Ann Gordon

(Hulphette

JFR Oct 22 - rest of
year

N

New Times

48.87 Shakungra

44

Balakrishna

Book?

46

4-6 89